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THE
Bridal of Triermain,

OR
THE VALE OF ST JOHN.

IN THREE CANTOS.

An elf-quene wol I love ywis,
For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun;
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-quene I me take
By dale and eke by doun.

RIME OF SIR THOPAS.

EDINBURGH :

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Preface	v
Introduction to Canto I.....	1
Canto I.	13
Canto II.....	51
Introduction to Canto III.	117
Canto III.	127
Conclusion	199
Notes	205
” Fragments	217

P R E F A C E.

IN the EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER for the year 1809, three Fragments were inserted, written in imitation of Living Poets. It must have been apparent, that by these prolusions, nothing burlesque, or disrespectful to the authors was intended, but that they were offered to the public as serious, though certainly very imperfect, imitations of that style of composition by which each of the writers is supposed to be distinguished. As these exercises

attracted a greater degree of attention than the author anticipated, he has been induced to complete one of them, and present it as a separate publication.

It is not in this place that an examination of the works of the master whom he has here adopted as his model, can, with propriety, be introduced; since his general acquiescence in the favourable suffrage of the public must necessarily be inferred from the attempt he has now made. He is induced, by the nature of his subject, to offer a few remarks on what has been called ROMANTIC POETRY;—the popularity of which has been revived in the present day under the auspices, and by the unparalleled success, of one individual.

The original purpose of poetry is either religious or historical, or, as must frequently happen, a mixture of both. To modern read-

ers, the poems of Homer have many of the features of pure romance ; but, in the estimation of his contemporaries, they probably derived their chief value from their supposed historical authenticity. The same may be generally said of the poetry of all early ages. The marvels and miracles which the poet blends with his song, do not exceed in number or extravagance the figments of the historians of the same period of society ; and, indeed, the difference betwixt poetry and prose, as the vehicles of historical truth, is always of late introduction. Poets, under various denominations of Bards, Scalds, Chroniclers, and so forth, are the first historians of all nations. Their intention is to relate the events they have witnessed, or the traditions that have reached them : and they clothe the relation in rhyme, merely as the means of ren-

dering it more solemn in the narrative, or more easily committed to memory. But as the poetical historian improves in the art of conveying information, the authenticity of his narrative unavoidably declines. He is tempted to dilate and dwell upon the events that are interesting to the imagination, and, conscious how indifferent his audience is to the naked truth of his poem, his history gradually becomes a romance.

It is in this situation that those epics are found which have been generally regarded the standards of poetry; and it has happened somewhat strangely, that the moderns have pointed out as the characteristics and peculiar excellencies of narrative poetry, the very circumstances which the authors themselves adopted, only because their art involved the duties of the historian as well as the poet. It

cannot be believed, for example, that Homer selected the siege of Troy as the most appropriate subject for poetry; his purpose was to write the early history of his country: the event he has chosen, though not very fruitful in varied incident, nor perfectly well adapted for poetry, was nevertheless combined with traditionary and genealogical anecdotes extremely interesting to those who were to listen to him, and this he has adorned by the exertions of a genius, which, if it has been equalled, has certainly never been surpassed. It was not till comparatively a late period that the general accuracy of his narrative, or his purpose in composing it, was brought into question. Δαμν πρῶτος ὁ Ἀναξαγόρας (καθὰ φησι Φωκυρίτης ἐν παιδοπαγῇ 'Ιστορίᾳ) τὴν Ὅμηρον ποιῆσιν ἀποφηνᾶσθαι μὴν περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ δικαιοσύνης.¹ But whatever the-

¹ Diogenes Laertius, l. 11. p. 86.

ories might be framed by speculative men, his work was of an historical, not of an allegorical nature. Εὐαγγέλλιστο μάλιστα τῇ Μυθῶς, καὶ ὅπως ἐκαστοῖς ἀφικαίη, καθάπερ ἐπιχρῶν διακρίνατο, καὶ ἰστορῶν ἐκτυθέντο. οὐκ ὅτι μὴ καὶ μνησθέναι καθ' ὅσον γράφεται.¹ Instead of recommending the choice of a subject similar to that of Homer, it was to be expected that critics should have exhorted the poets of these later days to adopt or invent a narrative in itself more susceptible of poetical ornament, and to avail themselves of that advantage in order to compensate, in some degree, the inferiority of genius. The contrary course has been inculcated by almost all the writers upon the *Epopœia*; with what success the fate of Homer's numerous imitators may best shew. The *ultimum supplicium* of criticism was inflicted on the author if he did not chuse

¹ Homeri Vita.

a subject which at once deprived him of all claim to originality, and placed him, if not in actual contest, at least in a fatal comparison with those giants in the land, whom it was most his interest to avoid. The celebrated receipt for writing an epic poem, which appeared in the Guardian, was the first instance in which common sense was applied to this department of poetry; and indeed, if the question be considered on its own merits, we must be satisfied that narrative poetry, if strictly confined to the great occurrences of history, would be deprived of the individual interest which it is so well calculated to excite.

Modern poets may therefore be pardoned in seeking simpler subjects of verse, more interesting in proportion to their simplicity. Two or three figures, well grouped, suit the artist better, than a crowd, for whatever pur-

pose assembled. For the same reason, a scene immediately presented to the imagination, and directly brought home to the feelings, though involving the fate but of one or two persons, is more favourable for poetry than the political struggles and convulsions which influence the fate of kingdoms. The former are within the reach and comprehension of all, and, if depicted with vigour, seldom fail to fix attention : The other, if more sublime, are more vague and distant, less capable of being distinctly understood, and infinitely less capable of exciting those sentiments which it is the very purpose of poetry to inspire. To generalize is always to destroy effect. We would, for example, be more interested in the fate of an individual soldier in combat, than in the grand events of a general action ; with the happiness of two lovers raised from misery

and anxiety to peace and union, than with the successful exertions of a whole nation. From what causes this may originate, is a separate and obviously an immaterial consideration. Before we admit it to be true, it is proper, however, to recollect, that while men see only a limited space, and while their affections and conduct are regulated, not by aspiring at an universal good, but by exerting their power of making themselves and others happy within the limited scale allotted to each individual, so long will individual history and individual virtue be the readier and more accessible road to general interest and attention; and perhaps we may add, that it is the more useful, as well as the more accessible, in as much as it affords an example capable of being easily imitated.

According to the author's idea of Romantic

Poetry, as distinguished from Epic, the former comprehends a fictitious narrative, framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer ; beginning and ending as he may judge best ; which neither exacts nor refuses the use of supernatural machinery ; which is free from the technical rules of the *Epos* ; and is subject only to those which good sense, good taste, and good morals, apply to every species of poetry without exception. . . The date may be in a remote age, or in the present ; the story may detail the adventures of a prince or of a peasant. In a word, the author is absolute master of his country and its inhabitants, and every thing is permitted to him, excepting to be heavy or prosaic, for which, free and unembarrassed as he is, he has no manner of apology. Those, it is probable, will be found the peculiarities of this species of composi-

tion : and, before joining the outcry against the vitiated taste that fosters and encourages it, the justice and grounds of it ought to be made perfectly apparent. If the want of sieges and battles and great military evolutions in our poetry is complained of, let us reflect, that the campaigns and heroes of our days are perpetuated in a record that neither requires nor admits of the aid of fiction ; and if the complaint refers to the inferiority of our bards, let us pay a just tribute to their modesty, limiting them, as it does, to subjects, which, however indifferently treated, have still the interest and charm of novelty, thus preventing them from adding insipidity to their other more insuperable defects.

THE
Bridal of Trtermath,
OR
THE VALE OF SAINT JOHN.
A LOVER'S TALE.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

COME, Lucy! while 'tis morning hour,
The woodland brook we needs must pass;
So, ere the sun assume his power,
We shelter in our poplar bower,

A

Where dew lies long upon the flower,
 Though vanished from the velvet grass.
 Curbing the stream, this stony ridge
 May serve us for a sylvan bridge ;
 For here, compelled to disunite,
 Round petty isles the runnels glide,
 And, chafing off their puny spite,
 The shallow murmurers waste their might,
 Yielding to footstep free and light
 A dry-shod pass from side to side.

II.

Nay, why this hesitating pause ?
 And, Lucy, as thy step withdraws,

Why sidelong eye the streamlet's brim?
 Titania's foot without a slip,
 Like thine though timid, light, and slim,
 From stone to stone might safely trip,
 Nor risque the glow-worm clasp to dip
 That binds her slipper's silken rim.
 Or trust thy lover's strength; nor fear
 That this same stalwart arm of mine,
 Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear,
 Shall shrink beneath the burthen dear
 Of form so slender, light and fine.—
 So,—now, the danger dared at last,
 Look back, and smile at perils past!

III.

And now we reach the favourite glade,
Paled in by copse-wood, cliff, and stone,
Where never harsher sounds invade,
To break Affection's whispering tone,
Than the deep breeze that waves the shade,
Than the small brooklet's feeble moan :
Come ! rest thee on thy wonted seat ;
Moss'd is the stone, the turf is green,
A place where lovers best may meet,
Who would not that their love be seen.
The boughs, that dim the summer sky,
Shall hide us from each lurking spy,
That fain would spread the invidious tale,

How Lucy of the lofty eye,
 Noble in birth, in fortunes high,
 She for whom lords and barons sigh,
 Meets her poor Arthur in the dale.

IV.

How deep that blush!—how deep that sigh!
 And why does Lucy shun mine eye?—
 Is it because that crimson draws
 Its colour from some secret cause,
 Some hidden movement of the breast,
 She would not that her Arthur guess'd?
 O! quicker far is lovers' ken
 Than the dull glance of common men,

And, by strange sympathy, can spell
 The thoughts the loved one will not tell!
 And mine, in Lucy's blush, saw met
 The hue of pleasure and regret;

Pride mingled in the sigh her voice,
 And shared with Love the crimson glow,
 Well pleased that thou art Arthur's choice,
 Yet shamed thine own is placed so low.
 Thou turn'st thy self-confessing cheek,
 As if to meet the breeze's cooling;
 Then, Lucy, hear thy tutor speak,
 For Love, too, has his hours of schooling.

V.

Too oft my anxious eye has spied
That secret grief thou fain would'st hide,
The passing pang of humbled pride :
Too oft, when through the splendid hall,
The load-star of each heart and eye,
My fair one leads the glittering ball,
Will her stolen glance on Arthur fall,
With such a blush and such a sigh !
Thou wouldst not yield, for wealth or rank,
The heart thy worth and beauty won,
Nor leave me on this mossy bank, ...
To meet a rival on a throne :
Why, then, should vain repinings rise,
That to thy lover fate denies

A nobler name, a wide domain,
 A baron's birth, a menial train,
 Since heaven assign'd him, for his part,
 A lyre, a faulchion, and a heart?

VI.

My sword——its master must be dumb;
 But, when a soldier names my name,
 Approach, my Lucy! fearless come,
 Nor dread to hear of Arthur's shame.
 My heart——'mid all yon courtly crew,
 Of lordly rank and lofty line,
 Is there, to love and honour true,
 That boasts a pulse so warm as mine?

They praised thy diamonds' lustre rare—

Matched with thine eyes, I thought it faded ;

They praised the pearls that bound thy hair—

I only saw the locks they braided ;

They talked of wealthy dower and land,

And titles, of high birth the token—

I thought of Lucy's heart and hand,

Nor knew the sense of what was spoken.

And yet, if ranked in Fortune's roll,

I might have learn'd their choice unwise,

Who rate the dower above the soul,

And Lucy's diamonds o'er her eyes.

VII.

My lyre—it is an idle toy,
That borrows accents not its own,
Like warbler of Columbian sky,
That sings but in a mimic tone.*
Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,
Nor boasts it aught of Border spell;
Its strings no feudal slogan pour,
Its heroes draw no broad claymore;
No shouting clans applauses raise,
Because it sung their fathers' praise;
On Scottish moor, or English down,
It ne'er was graced with fair renown;

* The Mocking Bird.

Nor won,—best meed to minstrel true,—
 One favouring smile from fair BUCCLEUCH !
 By one poor streamlet sounds its tone,
 And heard by one dear maid alone.

VIII.

But, if thou bid'st, these tones shall tell
 Of errant knight and damozelle ;
 Of the dread knot a wizard tied,
 In punishment of maiden's pride ;
 In notes of marvel and of fear,
 That best may charm romantic ear.
 For Lucy loves,—like COLLINS, ill-starr'd name !
 Whose lay's requital was, that tardy Fame,

Who bound no laurel round his living head,
Should hang it o'er his monument when dead,—
For Lucy loves to tread enchanted strand,
And thread, like him, the maze of Fairy-land;
Of golden battlements to view the gleam,
And slumber soft by some Elysian stream:
Such lays she loves,—and, such my Lucy's choice,
What other song can claim her poet's voice?

THE
Bridal of Trtermain.

**THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.**

CANTO FIRST.

**WHERE is the maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?
She must be lovely and constant and kind,
Holy and pure and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer and gentle of mood,
Courteous and generous and noble of blood—
Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an April day ;**

Constant and true as the widow'd dove,
Kind as a minstrel that sings of love ;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,
Where never sun-beam kiss'd the wave ;
Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain ;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers and dies,
Yet blithe as the light leaves that dance in its sighs
Courteous as monarch the morn he is crown'd,
Generous as spring-dews that bless the glad ground ;
Noble her blood as the currents that met
In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet—
Such must her form be, her mood and her strain,
That shall match with Sir Roland of Triermain.

.II.

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him to sleep,
His blood it was fevered, his breathing was deep.
He had been pricking against the Scot,
The foray was long and the skirmish hot ;
His dinted helm and his buckler's plight
Bore token of a stubborn fight.

All in the castle must hold them still,
Harpers must lull him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the best,
Till sleep sink down upon his breast,
Like the dew on a summer-hill.

III.

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-fog grey,
That like a silvery crape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant head,
And faintly gleam'd each painted pane
Of the lordly halls of Triermain,

When that baron bold awoke.

Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and hall,
While hastily he spoke.

IV.

**"Hearken, my minstrels! Which of you all
Touch'd his harp with that dying fall,**

**So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem'd an angel's whisper'd call**

To an expiring saint?

And hearken, my merrymen! What time or where

**Did she pass, that maid with her heav'nly brow,
With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel air,
And the eagle-plume on her dark-brown hair,
That pass'd from my bower e'en now!"—**

V.

Answer'd him Richard de Brettville ; he

Was chief of the baron's minstrelsy,—

“ Silent, noble chieftain, we

Have sate since midnight close,

When such lulling sounds as the brooklet sings,

Murmur'd from our melting strings,

And hush'd you to repose.

Had a harp-note sounded here,

It had caught my watchful ear,

Although it fell as faint and shy

As bashful maiden's half-form'd sigh,

When she thinks her lover near.”—

Answer'd Philip of Fasthwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer-hall,—
“ Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross'd ;

Else had I heard the steps, though low
And light they fell as when earth receives,
In morn of frost, the wither'd leaves,
That drop when no winds blow.”—

VI.

“ Then come thou hither, Henry, my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Hermitage,
When that dark castle, tower, and spire,
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,

And redden'd all the Nine-stane Hill,
 And the shrieks of death, that wildly broke
 Through devouring flame and smothering smoke,
 Made the warrior's heart-blood chill !
 The trustiest thou of all my train,
 My fleetest courser thou must rein,
 And ride to Lyulph's tower,
 And from the baron of Triermain
 Greet well that sage of power.
 He is sprung from druid sires,
 And British bards that tuned their lyres
 To Arthur's and Pendragon's praise,
 And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.

Gifted like his gifted race,
He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Helvellyn's cliffs sublime;
Sign and sigil well doth he know,
And can bode of weal and woe,
Of kingdoms' fall, and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of stars.
He shall tell me if middle earth
To that enchanting shape gave birth,
Or if 'twas but an airy thing,
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
Framed from the rain-bow's varying dyes,
Or fading tints of western skies.

For, by the blessed rood I swear,
 If that fair form breathe vital air,
 No other maiden by my side
 Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!"—

VII.

The faithful page he mounts his steed,
 And soon he cross'd green Irthing's mead,
 Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant plain,
 And Eden barr'd his course in vain,
 He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round,
 For feats of chivalry renown'd,
 Left Mayburgh's mound and stones of pow'r,
 By druids raised in magic hour,

And traced the Eamont's winding way,
Till Ulfo's lake beneath him lay.—

VIII.

Onwards he rode, the path-way still
Winding betwixt the lake and hill ;
Till on the fragment of a rock,
Struck from its base by lightning shock,
 He saw the hoary sage :
The silver moss and lichen twined,
With fern and deer-hair check'd and lined,
 A cushion fit for age ;
And o'er him shook the aspin tree,
A restless rustling canopy.

Then sprung young Henry from his selle,

And greeted Lyulph grave,

And then his master's tale did tell,

And then for counse) crave.

The Man of Years mused long and deep,

Of time's lost treasures taking keep,

And then, as rousing from a sleep,

His solemn answer gave.

"That maid is born of middle earth,

And may of man be won,

Though there have glided since her birth,

Five hundred years and one.

But where's the knight in all the north,

That dare the adventure follow forth,

So perilous to knightly worth,

In the Valley of Saint John?

Listen, youth, to what I tell,

And bind it on thy memory well ;

Nor muse that I commence the rhyme

Far distant 'mid the wrecks of time.

The mystic tale, by bard and sage,

Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X.

Lupph's Tale.

KING ARTHUR has ridden from merry Carlisle,

When Pentecost was o'er ;

He journeyed like errant knight the while,

And sweetly the summer sun did smile

On mountain, moss, and moor.

Above his solitary track

Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,

Amid whose yawning gulphs the sun

Cast umbered radiance red and dun,

Though never sun-beam could discern

The surface of that sable tarn,

In whose black mirror you may spy

The stars, while noon-tide lights the sky.

The gallant king he skirted still

The margin of that mighty hill;

Rocks upon rocks incumbent hung,
 And torrents, down the gullies flung,
 Join'd the rude river that brawl'd on,
 Recoiling now from crag and stone,
 Now diving deep from human ken,
 And raving down its darksome glen.
 The monarch judged this desert wild,
 With such romantic ruin piled,
 Was theatre by Nature's hand
 For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI.

O rather he chose, that monarch bold,
 On vent'rous quest to ride,

In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth of gold,
In princely bower to bide ;
The bursting crash of a foeman's spear,
As it shiver'd against his mail,
Was merrier music to his ear
Than courtier's whispered tale :
And the clash of Caliburn more dear,
When on the hostile casque it rung,
Than all the lays
To their monarch's praise
That the harpers of Rêged sung.
He loved better to rest by wood or river,
Than in bower of his bride, dame Guenever ;

For he left that lady so lovely of cheer,
 To follow adventures of danger and fear;
 And the frank-hearted monarch full little did wot
 That she smiled, in his absence, on brave Lancelot.

XII.

He rode, till over down and dell
 The shade more broad and deeper fell,
 And though around the mountain's head
 Flow'd streams of purple, gold, and red,
 Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
 Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd the stream.
 With toil the king his way pursued
 By lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,

Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow valley of SAINT JOHN,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sun-beams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The king drew up his charger's rein;
With gauntlet raised he skreen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,
And, from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
While 'gainst the sun his armour bright
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

XIII.

Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.
But, midmost of the vale, a mound
Arose, with airy turrets crown'd,
Buttress, and rampire's circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower ;
Seem'd some primeval giant's hand
The castle's massive walls had plann'd,
A ponderous bulwark, to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod's power.

Above the moated entrance slung,
The balanced draw-bridge trembling hung,
As jealous of a foe ;
Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
With iron studded, clenched, and barr'd,
And prong'd portcullis, joined to guard
The gloomy pass below.
But the grey walls no banners crown'd,
Upon the watch tower's airy round
No warder stood his horn to sound,
No guard beside the bridge was found,
And, where the gothic gateway frown'd,
Glanced neither bill nor bow.

XIV.

Beneath the castle's gloomy pride,

In ample round did Arthur ride

Three times ; nor living thing he spied,

Nor heard a living sound,

Save that, awakening from her dream,

The owlet now began to scream,

In concert with the rushing stream,

That washed the battled mound.

He lighted from his goodly steed,

And he left him to graze on bank and mead ;

And slowly he climbed the narrow way,

That reached the entrance grim and grey,

And he stood the outward arch below,
 And his bugle-horn prepar'd to blow,
 In summons blithe and bold,
 Deeming to rouse from iron sleep
 The guardian of this dismal keep,
 Which well he guess'd the hold
 Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,
 Or pagan of gigantic limb,
 The tyrant of the wold.

XV.

The ivory bugle's golden tip
 Twice touched the monarch's manly lip,
 And twice his hand withdrew.

Think not but Arthur's heart was good !

His shield was cross'd by the blessed rood,

Had a pagan host before him stood,

He had charged them through and through ;

Yet the silence of that ancient place

Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space

Ere yet his horn he blew.

But, instant as its larum rung,

The castle-gate was open flung,

Portcullis rose with crashing groan

Full harshly up its groove of stone,

The balance beams obeyed the blast,

And down the trembling draw-bridge cast.

The vaulted arch before him lay,
 With nought to bar the gloomy way,
 And onward Arthur paced, with hand
 On Caliburn's resistless brand.

XVI.

A hundred torches, flashing bright,
 Dispelled at once the gloomy night
 That loured along the walls,
 And shewed the king's astonished sight
 The inmates of the halls.
 Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,
 Nor giant huge of form and limb,
 Nor heathen knight, was there ;

But the cressets, which odours flung aloft,

Shewed, by their yellow light and soft,

A band of damsels fair !

Onward they came, like summer wave

That dances to the shore ;

An hundred voices welcome gave,

And welcome o'er and o'er !

An hundred lovely hands assail

The bucklers of the monarch's mail,

And busy laboured to unhasp

Rivet of steel and iron clasp ;

One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,

And one flung odours on his hair ;

His short curled ringlets one smooth'd down,
 One wreathed them with a myrtle crown.
 A bride upon her wedding day
 Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.

XVII.

Loud laughed they all,—the king, in vain,
 With questions tasked the giddy train ;
 Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
 'Twas one reply,—loud laughed they all.
 Then o'er him mimic chains they fling,
 Framed of the fairest flowers of spring,
 While some their gentle force unite,
 Onward to drag the wondering knight,

Some, bolder, urge his pace with blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had worn.
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintadgel's spear;
Two, laughing at their lack of strength,
Dragg'd Caliburn in cumbrous length;
One, while she sped a martial stride,
Placed on her brows the helmet's pride,
Then scream'd, 'twixt laughter and surprise,
To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.
With revel-shout, and triumph-song,
Thus gaily marched the giddy throng.

XVIII.

Through many a gallery and hall

They led, I ween, their royal thrall.

At length, beneath a fair arcade

Their march and song at once they staid.

The eldest maiden of the band,

(The lovely maid was scarce eighteen,)

Raised, with imposing air, her hand,

And reverend silence did command,

On entrance of their Queen,

And they were mute.—But as a glance

They steal on Arthur's countenance

Bewildered with surprise,

Their smothered mirth again 'gan speak,
 In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
 And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX.

The attributes of these high days
 Now only live in minstrel lays ;
 For Nature, now exhausted, still
 Was then profuse of good and ill.
 Strength was gigantic, valour high,
 And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky,
 And beauty had such matchless beam,
 As lights not now a lover's dream.
 Yet, e'en in that romantic age,

Ne'er were such charms by mortal seen
 As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,
 When forth on that enchanted stage,
 With glittering train of maid and page,
 Advanced the castle's Queen.
 While up the hall she slowly passed,
 Her dark eye on the king she cast,
 That flash'd expression strong ;
 The longer dwelt that lingering look,
 Her cheek the livelier colour took,
 And scarce the shame-faced king could brook
 The gaze that lasted long.
 A sage, who had that look espied,
 Where kindling passion strove with pride,

Had whispered, " Prince, beware!
 From the chafed tyger rend the prey,
 Rush on the lion when at bay,
 Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
 But shun that lovely snare!"

XX.

At once, that inward strife suppress'd,
 The dame'approached her warlike guest,
 With greeting in that fair degree,
 Where female pride and courtesy
 Are blended with such passing art
 As awes at once and charms the heart.

A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness 'gan to crave
Construction fair and true
Of her light maidens' idle mirth,
Who drew from lonely glens their birth,
Nor knew to pay to stranger worth
And dignity their due ;
And then she pray'd that he would rest
That night her castle's honoured guest.
The monarch meetly thanks express'd ;
The banquet rose at her behest,
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
Apace the evening flew.

XXI.

The lady sate the monarch by,
Now in her turn abashed and shy,
And with indifference seemed to hear
The toys he whispered in her ear.
Her bearing modest was and fair,
Yet shadows of constraint were there,
That shew'd an over-cautious care
 Some inward thought to hide ;
Oft did she pause in full reply,
And oft cast down her large dark eye,
Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh,
 That heaved her bosom's pride.

Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know

How hot the mid-day sun shall glow

From the mist of morning sky ;

And so the wily monarch guess'd,

That this assumed restraint express'd

More ardent passions in the breast,

Than ventured to the eye.

Closer he press'd, while beakers rang,

While maidens laughed and minstrels sang,

Still closer to her ear—

But why pursue the common tale ?

Or wherefore shew how knights prevail

When ladies dare to hear ?

Or wherefore trace, from what slight cause

Its source one tyrant passion draws,

Till, mastering all within,

Where lives the man that has not tried,

How mirth can into folly glide,

And folly into sin !

THE
Bridal of Trtermain.

CANTO SECOND.

THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO SECOND.

Kyulph's Tale, continued.

**ANOTHER day, another day,
And yet another glides away !
The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
Maraud on Britain's shores again.**

Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
 Lies loitering in a lady's bower ;
 The horn, that foemen wont to fear,
 Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian deer,
 And Caliburn, the British pride,
 Hangs useless by a lover's side.

II.

Another day, another day,
 And yet another glides away !
 Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
 He thinks not of the Table Round ;
 In lawless love dissolved his life,
 He thinks not of his beauteous wife ;

Better he loves to snatch a flower
From bosom of his paramour,
Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
The honours of his heathen crest;
Better to wreath, 'mid tresses brown,
The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
Than o'er the altar give to flow
The banners of a paynim foe.
Thus, week by week, and day by day,
His life inglorious glides away,
But she, that soothes his dream, with fear
Beholds his hour of wakening near.

III.

Much force have mortal charms to stay
Our pace in Virtue's toilsome way ;
But Guendolen's might far outshine
Each maid of merely mortal line.
Her mother was of human birth,
Her sire a Genie of the earth,
In days of old deemed to preside
O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
By youths and virgins worshipped long,
With festive dance and choral song,
Till, when the cross to Britain came,
On heathen altars died the flame.

Now, deep in Wastdale's solitude,
 The downfall of his rites he rued,
 And, born of his resentment heir,
 He trained to guile that lady fair,
 To sink in slothful sin and shame
 The champions of the Christian name.
 Well-skilled to keep vain thoughts alive,
 And all to promise, nought to give,
 The timid youth had hope in store,
 The bold and pressing gained no more.
 As wildered children leave their home,
 After the rainbow's arch to roam,
 Her lovers bartered fair esteem,
 Fame, faith, and honour, for a dream.



IV.

Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
She practised thus—till Arthur came ;
Then, frail humanity had part,
And all the mother claimed her heart.
Forgot each rule her father gave,
Sunk from a princess to a slave,
Too late must Guendolen deplore,
He, that has all, can hope no more !
Now must she see her lover strain,
At every turn, her feeble chain ;
Watch, to new-bind each knot, and shrink
To view each fast-decaying link.

Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
Her vest to zone, her locks to braid;
Each varied pleasure heard her call,
The feast, the tourney, and the ball:
Her storied lore she next applies,
Taxing her mind to aid her eyes;
Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again;
Now, raptured, with each wish complying,
With feigned reluctance now denying;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart—and all in vain!

V.

Thus, in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realm to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse and arbour, decks the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way——
Vain art! vain hope! 'tis fruitless all!
At length we reach the bounding wall,

And, sick of flower and trim-dressed tree,
Long for rough glades, and forest free.

VI.

Three summer months had scantily flown,
When Arthur, in embarrassed tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a monarch sway,
Duties, unknown to humbler men,
Must tear her knight from Guendolen.—
She listened silently the while,
Her mood expressed in bitter smile;

Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
 And oft resume the unfinished tale,
 Confessing, by his downcast eye,
 The wrong he sought to justify.
 He ceased. A moment mute she gazed,
 And then her looks to heaven she raised ;
 One palm her temples veiled, to hide
 The tear that sprung in spite of pride ;
 The other for an instant pressed
 The foldings of her silken vest !

VII.

At her reproachful sign and look,
 The hint the monarch's conscience took.

Eager he spoke—"No, lady, no!
Deem not of British Arthur so,
Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love!
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That, if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir;
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To chuse that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer day in lists shall strive
My knights,—the bravest knights alive,—
And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for bride."——

He spoke, with voice resolved and high—

The lady deigned him not reply.

VIII.

At dawn of morn, ere on the brake

His matins did a warbler make,

Or stirr'd his wing to brush away

A single dew-drop from the spray,

Ere yet a sunbeam, through the mist,

The castle battlements had kiss'd,

The gates revolve, the draw-bridge falls,

And Arthur sallies from the walls.

Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,

And steel from spur to helmet-plume,

His Lybian steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neighed beneath his load.
The monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo ! to his astonished ken
Appeared the form of Guendolen.

IX.

Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood ;
Sandall'd her feet, her ancles bare,
And eagle plumage decked her hair ;
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.

"Thou goest!" she said, "and ne'er again
 Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
 Full fain would I this hour delay,
 Though weak the wish—yet, wilt thou stay?—
 No! thou look'st forward. Still attend,—
 Part we like lover and like friend."—
 She raised the cup—"Not this the juice
 The sluggish vines of earth produce;
 Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
 Which Genii love!"—she said, and quaff'd;
 And strange unwonted lustres fly
 From her flushed cheek and sparkling eye.

X.

The courteous monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddle-bow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell.
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright—
—The peasant still can shew the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.—
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,

That burned and blighted where it fell !

The frantic steed rushed up the dell,

As whistles from the bow the reed ;

Nor bit nor rein could check his speed

Until he gained the hill ;

Then breath and sinew failed apace,

And, reeling from the desperate race,

He stood exhausted, still.

The monarch, breathless and amazed,

Back on the fatal castle gazed——

Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,

Darkening against the morning sky ;

But, on the spot where once they frowned,

The lonely streamlet brawled around

A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rock and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The king wends back to fair Carlisle ;
And cares, that cumber royal sway,
Wore memory of the past away.

XI,

Full fifteen years, and more, were sped ;
Each brought new wreaths for Arthur's head.
Twelve bloody fields, with glory fought,
The Saxons to subjection brought ;
Rython, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne ;

The Pictish Gillamore in fight,
 And Roman Lucius, owned his might ;
 And wide was through the world renowned
 The glories of his Table Round.
 Each knight, who sought adventurous fame,
 To the bold court of Britain came,
 And all who suffered causeless wrong,
 From tyrant proud or faitour strong,
 Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
 Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII.

For this the King, with pomp and pride,
 Hold solemn court at Whitsuntide,

And summoned prince and peer,
All who owed homage for their land,
Or who craved knighthood from his hand,
Or who had succour to demand,

To come from far and near.
At such high tide, were glee and game
Mingled with feats of martial fame,
For many a stranger champion came

In lists to break a spear ;
And not a knight of Arthur's host,
Save that he trod some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost

Before him must appear.—

Ah, Minstrels ! when the Table Round

Arose, with all its warriors crowned,

There was a theme for bards to sound

In triumph to their string !

Five hundred years are past and gone,

But Time shall draw his dying groan,

Ere he behold the British throne

Begirt with such a ring !

XIII.

The heralds named the appointed spot,

As Caerleon or Camelot,

Or Carlisle fair and free.

At Penrith, now, the feast was set,

And in fair Eamont's vale was met

The flower of chivalry.

There Galaad sate with manly grace,

Yet maiden meekness in his face ;

There Morolt of the iron mace,

And love-lorn Tristrem there :

And Dinadam with lively glance,

And Lanval with the fairy lance,

And Mordred with his look askaunce,

Brunor and Bevidere.

Why should I tell of numbers more ?

Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,

Sir Carodac the keen,

The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
 Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
 And Lancelot, that evermore
 Look'd stol'n-wise on the Queen.

XIV.

When wine and mirth did most abound,
 And harpers play'd their blithest round,
 A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
 And marshals cleared the ring;
 A Maiden, on a palfrey white,
 Heading a band of damsels bright,
 Paced through the circle to alight
 And kneel before the King.

Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
Her graceful boldness check'd by awe,
Her dress like huntress of the wold,
Her bow and baldrick trapped with gold,
Her sandall'd feet, her ancles bare,
And the eagle plume that decked her hair.
Graceful her veil she backward flung——
The King, as from his seat he sprung,
Almost cried, "Guendolen!"
But 'twas a face more frank and wild,
Betwixt the woman and the child,
Where less of magic beauty smiled
Than of the race of men;

And in the forehead's haughty grace,
The lines of Britain's royal race,
Pendragon's, you might ken.

XV.

Faltering, yet gracefully, she said—
“Great Prince! behold an orphan maid,
In her departed mother's name,
A father's vowed protection claim!
The vow was sworn in desert lone,
In the deep valley of Saint John.”—
At once the King the suppliant raised,
And kissed her brow, her beauty praised;

His vow, he said, should well be kept,
Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd ;
Then, conscious, glanced upon his queen :
But she, unruffled at the scene,
Of human frailty construed mild,
Looked upon Lancelot, and smiled.

XVI.

“ Up ! up ! each knight of gallant crest !
Take buckler, spear, and brand !
He, that to-day shall bear him best,
Shall win my Gyneth's hand.

And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,

Shall bring a noble dower ;

Both fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged wide,

And Carlisle town and tower."—

Then might you hear each valiant knight,

To page and squire that cried,

" Bring my armour bright, and my courser wight !

'Tis not each day that a warrior's might

May win a royal bride."—

Then cloaks and caps of maintenance

In haste aside they fling ;

The helmets glance, and gleams the lance,

And the steel-weaved hauberks ring.

Small care had they of their peaceful array;

They might gather it that wolde :

For brake and bramble glittered gay,

With pearls and cloth of gold.

XVII.

Within trumpet-sound of the Table-Round

Were fifty champions free ;

And they all arise to fight that prize,—

They all arise, but three.

Nor love's fond troth, nor wedlock's oath,

One gallant could withhold,

For priests will allow of a broken vow,

For penance, or for gold.

But sigh and glance from ladies bright

Among the troop were thrown,

To plead their right, and true-love plight,

And plain of honour flown.

The knights they busied them so fast,

With buckling spur and belt,

That sigh and look, by ladies cast,

Werè neither seen nor felt.

From pleading, or upbraiding glance,

Each gallant turns aside,

And only thought, " If speeds my lance,

A queen becomes my bride !

She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged wide,

And Carlisle tower and town !—

She is the loveliest maid, beside,

That ever heir'd a crown."—

So in haste their coursers they bestride,

And strike their visors down.

XVIII.

The champions, armed in martial sort,

Have thronged into the list,

And but three knights of Arthur's court

Are from the tourney miss'd.

And still these lovers' fame survives

For faith so constant shown,—

There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,

And one who loved his own.

The first was Launcelot de Lac,
 The second Tristrem bold,
 The third was valiant Carodac,
 Who won the cup of gold,
 What time, of all King Arthur's crew,
 (Thereof came jeer and laugh,)
 He, as the mate of lady true,
 Alone the cup could quaff
 Though envy's tongue would fain surmize
 That, but for very shame,
 Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,
 Had given both cup and dame;
 Yet, since but one of that fair court
 Was true to wedlock's shrine,

Brand him who will with base report,—

He shall be free from mine.

XIX.

Now caracol'd the steeds in air,

Now plumes and pennons wantoned fair,

As all around the lists so wide

In panoply the champions ride.

King Arthur saw, with startled eye,

The flower of chivalry march by,

The bulwark of the Christian creed,

The kingdom's shield in hour of need.

Too late he thought him of the woe

Might from their civil conflict flow ;

For well he knew they would not part
 Till cold was many a gallant heart.
 His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
 And Gyneth then apart he drew ;
 To her his leading-staff resigned,
 But added caution grave and kind.

XX.

“ Thou see'st, my child, as promise-bound,
 I bid the trump for tourney sound.
 Take thou my warder, as the queen
 And umpire of the martial scene ;
 But mark thou this :—as Beauty bright
 Is polar star to valiant knight,

As at her word his sword he draws,
His fairest guerdon her applause,
So gentle maid should never ask
Of knighthood vain and dangerous task;
And Beauty's eyes should ever be
Like the twin stars that sooth the sea,
And Beauty's breath should whisper peace,
And bid the storm of battle cease.
I tell thee this, lest all too far
These knights urge tourney into war.
Blithe at the trumpet let them go,
And fairly counter blow for blow ;—
No striplings these, who succour need
For a razed helm or falling steed.

But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,
 And threatens death or deadly harm,
 Thy sire entreats, thy king commands,
 Thou drop the warder from thy hands.
 Trust thou thy father with thy fate,
 Doubt not he choose thee fitting mate;
 Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride
 A rose of Arthur's chaplet died."—

XXI.

A proud and discontented glow
 O'ershadowed Gyneth's brow of snow;
 She put the warder by :—

" Reserve thy boon, my liege," she said,

" Thus chaffered down and limited,

Debased and narrowed, for a maid

Of less degree than I.

No petty chief, but holds his heir

At a more honoured price and rare

Than Britain's king holds me !

Although the sun-burn'd maid, for dower,

Has but her father's rugged tower,

His barren hill and lea.

King Arthur swore, ' by crown and sword,

' As belted knight, and Britain's lord,

' That a whole summer's day should strive

' His knights, the bravest knights alive !'

Recall thine oath ! and to her glen
Poor Gyneth can return agen ;
Not on thy daughter will the stain,
That soils thy sword and crown, remain.
But think not she will e'er be bride
Save to the bravest, proved and tried ;
Pendragon's daughter will not fear
For clashing sword or splintered spear,
Nor shrink though blood should flow ;
And all too well sad Guendolen
Hath taught the faithlessness of men,
That child of hers should pity, when
Their meed they undergo."—

XXII.

He frowned and sighed, the monarch bold :—

“ I give, what I may not withhold ;

For, not for danger, dread, nor death,

Must British Arthur break his faith.

Too late I mark, thy mother's art

Hath taught thee this relentless part.

I blame her not, for she had wrong ;

But not to these my faults belong.

Use, then, the warder as thou wilt ;

But trust me, that, if life be spilt,

In Arthur's love, in Arthur's grace,

Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place.”—

With that he turned his head aside,
Nor brooked to gaze upon her pride,
As, with the truncheon raised, she sate
The arbitress of mortal fate ;
Nor brooked to mark, in ranks disposed,
How the bold champions stood opposed,
For the shrill trumpet-flourish fell
Upon his ear, like passing bell !
Then first from sight of martial fray
Did Britain's champion turn away.

XXIII.

But Gyneth heard the clangor high,
As hears the hawk the partridge-cry.

Oh, blame her not ! the blood was hers,
That at the trumpet's summons stirs ;—
And e'en the gentlest female eye
Might the brave strife of chivalry

Awhile untroubled view ;
So well accomplished was each knight,
To strike and to defend in fight,
Their meeting was a goodly sight,

While plate and mail held true.
The lists with painted plumes were strown,
Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breast-plate bloodless shone ;
It seemed their feathered crests alone
Should this encounter rue.

And ever, as the combat grows,
The trumpet's cheery voice arose ;
Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows
The merry greenwood through.

XXIV.

But soon to earnest grew their game ;
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there came
Knights, who shall rise no more !
Gone was the pride the war that graced,
Gay shields were cleft, and crests defaced,
And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,

And pennons streamed with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with head-long sway,
Unheeding where they fell;
And now the trumpet's clamours seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulphing stream,
The sinking seaman's knell!

XXV.

Seemed in this dismal hour, that Fate
Would Camlan's ruin antedate,

And spare dark Mordred's crime ;
 Already gasping on the ground,
 Lie twenty of the Table Round,
 Of chivalry the prime.
 Arthur, in anguish, tore away
 From head and beard his tresses grey,
 And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
 And quaked with ruth and fear ;
 But still she deemed her mother's shade
 Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade
 The sign that had the slaughter staid,
 And chid the rising tear.
 Then Brunor, Taulas, Mador, fell,
 Helias the White, and Lionel,

And many a champion more ;
Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
Lies gasping in his gore.
Vanoc, by mighty Morolt press'd
Even to the confines of the list,
Young Vanoc of the beardless face,
(Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's race,)
O'erpower'd at Gyneth's footstool bled;
His heart's blood dyed her sandals red.
But then the sky was overcast,
Then howled at once a whirlwind's blast,

And, rent by sudden throes,
 Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking earth,
 And from the gulph, tremendous birth !
 The form of Merlin rose.

XXVI.

Sternly the wizard prophet eyed
 The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
 And sternly raised his hand :—
 “ Madmen !” he said, “ your strife forbear !
 And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear
 The doom thy fates demand !
 Long shall close in stony sleep
 Eyes for ruth that would not weep,

Iron lethargy shall seal
 Heart that pity scorned to feel.
 Yet, because thy mother's art
 Warp'd thine unsuspecting heart,
 And for love of Arthur's race,
 Punishment is blent with grace.
 Thou shalt bear thy penance lone,
 In the Valley of Saint John,
 And this weird* shall overtake thee;—
 Sleep, until a knight shall wake thee,
 For feat of arms as far renowned
 As warrior of the Table Round.

* Doom.

G

Long endurance of thy slumber
 Well may teach the world to number
 All their woes from Gyneth's pride,
 When the Red Cross champions died."—

XXVII.

As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth's eye
 Slumber's load begins to lie;
 Fear and Anger vainly strive
 Still to keep its light alive.
 Twice, with effort and with pause,
 O'er her brow her hand she draws;
 Twice her strength in vain she tries,
 From the fatal chair to rise;

Merlin's magic doom is spoken,
Vanoc's death must now be wroken.
Slow the dark fringed eye-lids fall,
Curtaining each azure ball,
Slowly as on summer eves
Violets fold their dusky leaves.
The weighty baton of command
Now bears down her sinking hand,
On her shoulder droops her head ;
Net of pearl and golden thread,
Bursting, gave her locks to flow
O'er her arm and breast of snow.
And so lovely seemed she there,
Spell-bound in her ivory chair,

That her angry sire, repenting,
Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
And the champions, for her sake,
Would again the contest wake ;
Till, in necromantic night,
Gyneth vanished from their sight.

XXVIII.

Still she bears her weird alone,
In the Valley of Saint John.
And her semblance oft will seem
Mingling in a champion's dream,
Of her weary lot to plain,
And crave his aid to burst her chain.

While her wondrous tale was new,
Warriors to her rescue drew,
East and west, and south and north,
From the Liffy, Thames, and Forth.
Most have sought in vain the glen,
Tower nor castle could they ken;
Not at every time or tide,
Nor by every eye descried.
Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,
Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,

When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few returned no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Well nigh lost is Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till wakened by the trump of doom.

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.

Here pause, my tale : for all too soon,
My Lucy, comes the hour of noon.

Already from thy lofty dome
Its courtly inmates 'gin to roam,
And each, to kill the goodly day
That God has granted them, his way
Of lazy sauntering has sought ;
Lordlings and witlings not a few,
Incapable of doing aught,
Yet ill at ease with nought to do.
Here is no longer place for me ;
For, Lucy, thou wouldst blush to see
Some phantom, fashionably thin,
With limb of lath and kerchiefed chin,
And lounging gape, or sneering grin,
Steal sudden on our privacy.

And how should I, so humbly born,
 Endure the graceful spectre's scorn?—
 Faith ! ill I fear, while conjuring wand
 Of English oak is hard at hand.

II.

Or grant the hour be all too soon.
 For Hessian boot and pantaloons,
 And grant the lounge seldom strays
 Beyond the smooth and gravelled maze,
 Laud we the gods, that Fashion's train
 Holds hearts of more adventurous strain.
 Artists are hers, who scorn to trace
 Their rules from Nature's boundless grace,

But their right paramount assert
 To limit her by pedant art;
 Damning whate'er of vast and fair
 Exceeds a canvas three feet square.
 This thicket, for their *gumption* fit,
 May furnish such a happy bit.
 Bards, too, are here, wont to recite
 Their own sweet lays by waxen light,
 Half in the salver's tinkle drown'd,
 While the *chasse-café* glides around;
 And such may hither secret stray,
 To labour *à extempore*:
 Or sportsman, with his boisterous holla,
 May here his wiser spaniel follow,

Or stage-struck Juliet may presume
To choose this bower for tyring room ;
And we alike must shun regard,
From painter, player, sportsman, bard.
Insects that skim in Fashion's sky,
Wasp, blue-bottle, or butterfly,
Lucy, have all alarms for us,
For all can hum and all can buz.

III.

But oh, my Lucy, say how long
We still must dread this trifling throng,
And stoop to hide, with coward art,
The genuine feelings of the heart !

No parents thine, whose just command
Should rule their child's obedient hand;
Thy guardians, with contending voice,
Press each his individual choice.
And which is Lucy's?—Can it be
That puny fop, trimmed cap-a-pee,
Who loves in the saloon to shew
The arms that never knew a foe;
Whose sabre trails along the ground,
Whose legs in shapeless boots are drowned;
A new Achilles, sure,—the steel
Fled from his breast to fence his heel;
One, for the simple manly grace
That wont to deck our martial race,

Who comes in foreign trashery
 Of tinkling chain and spur,
 A walking haberdashery,
 Of feathers, lace, and fur :
 In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
 Horse-milliner* of modern days.

IV.

Or is it he, the wordy youth,
 So early train'd for statesman's part,

* " The trammels of the palfraye pleased his sight,
 And the horse-millanere his head with roses dight."

ROWLEY'S *Ballads of Charitie.*

Who talks of honour, faith, and truth,
As themes that he has got by heart;
Whose ethics Chesterfield can teach,
Whose logic is from Single-speech ;
Who scorns the meanest thought to vent,
Save in the phrase of parliament ;
Who, in a tale of cat and mouse,
Calls " order," and " divides the house,"
Who " craves permission to reply,"
Whose " noble friend is in his eye ;"
Whose loving tender some have reckon'd
A *motion* you should gladly *second*.

V.

What, neither ? Can there be a third,
To such resistless swains preferred ?—
O why, my Lucy, turn aside,
With that quick glance of injured pride !
Forgive me, love ; I cannot bear
That altered and resentful air.
Were all the wealth of Russel mine,
And all the rank of Howard's line,
All would I give for leave to dry
That dew-drop trembling in thine eye.
Think not I fear such fops can wile
From Lucy more than careless smile ;

But yet if wealth and high degree
Give gilded counters currency,
Must I not fear, when rank and birth
Stamp the pure ore of genuine worth?
Nobles there are, whose martial fires
Rival the fame that raised their sires,
And patriots, skilled through storms of fate
To guide and guard the reeling state.
Such, such there are—if such should come,
Arthur must tremble and be dumb,
Self-exiled seek some distant shore,
And mourn till life and grief are o'er.

VI.

What sight, what signal of alarm,
That Lucy clings to Arthur's arm?
Or is it, that the rugged way
Makes Beauty lean on lover's stay?
Oh, no! for on the vale and brake,
Nor sight nor sounds of danger wake,
And this trim sward of velvet green
Were carpet for the fairy queen.
That pressure slight was but to tell,
That Lucy loves her Arthur well,
And fain would banish from his mind
Suspicious fear and doubt unkind.

VII.

But would'st thou bid the demons fly
Like mist before the dawning sky,
There is but one resistless spell—
Say, wilt thou guess, or must I tell?
'Twere hard to name, in minstrel phrase,
A landaulet and four blood-bays,
But bards agree this wizard band
Can but be bound in Northern Land.
'Tis there—nay, draw not back thy hand!—
'Tis there this slender finger round
Must golden amulet be bound,
Which, blessed with many a holy prayer,
Can change to rapture lovers' care,

And doubt and jealousy shall die,
And fears give place to ecstasy!

VIII.

Now, trust me, Lucy, all too long.
Has been thy lover's tale and song.

O why so silent, love, I pray?
Have I not spoke the livelong day?
And will not Lucy deign to say

One word her friend to bless?
I ask but one—a simple sound,
Within three little letters bound,

O let the word be YES!

END OF CANTO SECOND.

THE
Bridal of Triermain.

**THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.**

CANTO THIRD.

INTRODUCTION.

Long loved, long wooed, and lately won,
My life's best hope, and now mine own!
Doth not this rude and Alpine glen
Recall our favourite haunts agen?
A wild resemblance we can trace,
Though reft of every softer grace,

As the rough warrior's brow may bear

A likeness to a sister fair.

Full well advised our Highland host,

That this wild pass on foot be cross'd,

While round Ben-Cruach's mighty base

Wheel the slow steeds and lingering chaise.

The keen old Carle, with Scottish pride,

He praised his glen and mountains wide ;

An eye he bears for Nature's face,

Aye, and for woman's lovely grace.

Even in such mean degree we find

The subtle Scot's observing mind.

For, nor the chariot nor the train

Could gape of vulgar wonder gain,

But when old Allan would expound
 Of Beal-na-paish* the Celtic sound,
 His bonnet doff'd, and bow, applied
 His legend to my bonny bride;
 While Lucy blushed beneath his eye,
 Courteous and cautious, shrewd and sly.

II.

Enough of him.—Now, ere we lose,
 Plunged in the vale, the distant views,
 Turn thee, my love! look back once more
 To the blue lake's retiring shore.

* Beal-na-paish, the Vale of the Bridal.

On its smooth breast the shadows seem
Like objects in a morning dream,
What time the slumberer is aware
He sleeps, and all the vision's air :
Even so, on yonder liquid lawn,
In hues of bright reflection drawn,
Distinct the shaggy mountains lie,
Distinct the rocks, distinct the sky ;
The summer clouds so plain we note,
That we might count each dappled spot ;
We gaze and we admire, yet know
The scene is all delusive shew.
Such dreams of bliss would Arthur draw,
When first his Lucy's form he saw ;

Yet sigh'd and sicken'd as he drew,
Despairing they could e'er prove true!

III.

But, Lucy, turn thee now, to view

Up the fair glen our destined way;

The fairy path that we pursue,

Distinguished but by greener hue,

Winds round the purple brae,

While Alpine flowers of varied dye

For carpet serve, or tapestry.

See how the little runnels leap,

In threads of silver, down the steep,

To swell the brooklet's moan!

Seems that the Highland Naiad grieves,
 Fantastic while her crown she weaves,
 Of rowan, birch, and alder leaves,
 So lovely, and so lone.

There's no illusion there; these flowers,
 That wailing brook, these lovely bowers,
 Are, Lucy, ~~all~~ our own;

And, since thine Arthur called thee wife,
 Such seems the prospect of his life!
 A lovely path, on-winding still,
 By gurgling brook and sloping hill.
 'Tis true, that mortals cannot tell
 What waits them in the distant dell;
 But be it hap, or be it harm,
 We tread the path-way arm in arm.

IV.

And now, my Lucy, wot'st thou why
 I could thy bidding twice deny,
 When twice you prayed I would again
 Resume the legendary strain
 Of the bold Knight of Triermain?
 At length yon peevish vow you swore,
 That you would sue to me no more,
 Until the minstrel fit drew near,
 And made me prize a listening ear.

But, loveliest, when thou first didst pray
 Continuance of the knightly lay,
 Was it not on the happy day
 That made thy hand mine own?

When, dazzled with mine ecstasy,
 Nought past, or present, or to be,
 Could I or think on, hear, or see,
 Save, Lucy, thee alone !
 A giddy draught my rapture was,
 As ever chemist's magic gas.

V.

Again the summons I denied
 In yon fair capital of Clyde ;
 My Harp—or let me rather chuse
 The good old classic form—my Muse,
 (For Harp's an over-scudched phrase,
 Worn out by bards of modern days,)

My Muse, then,—seldom will she wake

Save by dim wood and silent lake ;

She is a wild and rustic Maid,

Whose foot unsandal'd loves to tread

Where the soft green-sward is inlaid

With varied moss and thyme ;

And, lest the simple lily-braid,

That coronets her temples, fade,

She hides her still in greenwood shade,

To meditate her rhyme.

VI.

And now she comes ! The murmur dear

Of the wild brook hath caught her ear,

The glade hath won her eye ;

She longs to join with each blithe fill

That dances down the Highland hill,

Her blither melody.

And now, my Lucy's way to cheer,

She bids Ben-Crunch's echoes hear

How closed the tale, my love where

Loved for its chivalry.

List how she tells, in notes of flame,

"Child Roland to the dark tower came!"—

THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO THIRD.

**Bewcastle now must keep the Hold,
Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall,
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall ;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Tarras and Ewse keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale forray Cumberland.**

Of wasted fields and plundered flocks

The Borderers bootless may complain ;

They lack the sword of brave De Vaux,

There comes no aid from Triermain.

That lord, on high adventure bound,

Hath wandered forth alone,

And day and night keeps watchful round

In the Valley of St John.

II.

When first began his vigil bold,

The moon twelve summer nights was old,

And shone both fair and full ;

High in the vault of cloudless blue,
O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw

Her light composed and cool.

Stretched on the brown hill's heathy breast,

Sir Roland eyed the vale;

Chief, where, distinguished from the rest,

Those clustering rocks upreared their crest,

The dwelling of the Fair distressed,

As told grey Lyulph's tale.

Thus as he lay, the lamp of night

Was quivering on his armour bright,

In beams that rose and fell,

And danced upon his buckler's boss,

That lay beside him on the moss,

As on a crystal well. •

III.

Ever he watched, and oft he deemed,
 While on the mound the moonlight streamed,
 It altered to his eyes;
 Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change
 To buttressed walls their shapeless range,
 Fain think, by transmutation strange,
 He saw grey turrets rise.
 But scarce his heart with hope throbb'd high,
 Before the wild illusions fly,
 Which fancy had conceived,
 Abetted by an anxious eye
 That longed to be deceived.
 It was a fond deception all,
 Such as, in solitary hall,

Beguiles the musing eye,
 When, gazing on the sinking fire,
 Bulwark and battlement and spire
 In the red gulph we spy.
 For, seen by moon of middle night,
 Or by the blaze of noontide bright,
 Or by the dawn of morning light,
 Or evening's western flame,
 In every tide, at every hour,
 In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
 The rocks remained the same.

IV.

Oft has he traced the charmed mound,
 Oft climbed its crest, or paced it round,

Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
To a rough fortress bore.
Yet still his watch the Warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom sleeps,
And drinks but of the well ;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
Invoking every Saint at need,
For aid to burst the spell.

V.

And now the moon her orb has hid,

And dwindled to a silver thread,

Dim seen in middle heaven,

While o'er its curve careering fast,

Before the fury of the blast,

The midnight clouds are driven.

The brooklet raved, for on the hills

The upland showers had swoln the rills,

And down the torrents came ;

Muttered the distant thunder dread,

And frequent o'er the vale was spread

A sheet of lightning flame.

De Vaux, within his mountain cave,

(No human step the storm durst brave,)

To moody meditation gave
 Each faculty of soul,
 Till, lulled by distant torrent sound,
 And the sad wind that whistled round,
 Upon his thoughts, in musing drown'd,
 A broken slumber stole.

VI.

'Twas then was heard a heavy sound;
 (Sound strange and fearful there to hear,
 'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues around,
 Dwelt but the gor-cock and the deer.)
 As starting from his couch of fern,
 Again he heard, in clangor stern,

That deep and solemn swell,
 Twelve times, in measured tone, it spoke,
 Like some proud minster's pealing clock,
 Or city's laram-bell.

What thought was Roland's, first when fell,
 In that deep wilderness, the knell

Upon his startled ear?—
 To slander warrior were I loth,
 Yet must I hold my minstrel troth,—
 It was a thought of fear.

VII.

But lively was the mingled thrill
 That chased that momentary chill,

For Love's keen wish was there,
And eager Hope, and Valour high,
And the proud glow of Chivalry,
That burned to do and dare.
Forth from the cave the Warrior rush'd,
Long ere the mountain-voice was hush'd,
That answered to the knell;
For long and far the unwonted sound,
Eddying in echoes round and round,
Was tossed from fell to fell;
And Glaramara answer flung,
And Grisdale-pike responsive rung,
And Legbert heights their echoes swung,
As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII.

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed

The Knight, bedeaftened and amazed,

Till all was hushed and still,

Save the swollen torrent's sullen roar,

And the night-blast that wildly bore

Its course along the hill.

Then on the northern sky there came

A light, as of reflected flame,

And over Legbert-head,

As if by magic art controll'd,

A mighty Meteor slowly roll'd

Its orb of fiery red ;

Thou wouldst have thought some dæmon dire

Came mounted on that car of fire,

To do his errand dread.

Far on the sloping valley's course,
On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
Shingle and Scrae,¹ and Fell and Force,²

A dusky light arose:
Display'd, yet altered, was the scene;
Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
Even the gay thicket's summer green,
In bloody tincture glows.

IX.

De Vaux had marked the sunbeams set,
At eve, upon the coronet

¹ Bank of loose stones.

² Water-fall.

Of that enchanted mound,
 And seen but crags at random flung,
 That, o'er the brawling torrent hung,
 In desolation frown'd.
 What sees he by that meteor's hour?—
 A bannered Castle, Keep, and Tower,
 Returns the lurid gleam;
 With battled walls and buttress fast,
 And barbican¹ and ballium² vast,
 And airy flanking towers, that cast
 Their shadows on the stream.

¹ The outer defence of the castle-gate.

² Fortified court.

'Tis no deceit! distinctly clear
 Crenell¹ and parapet appear,
 While o'er the pile that meteor drear
 Makes momentary pause;
 Then forth its solemn path it drew,
 And fainter yet and fainter grew
 Those gloomy towers upon the view,
 As its wild light withdraws.

X.

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
 O'er crag and stream, through briar and bush;

¹ Apertures for shooting arrows.

Yet far he had not sped,
Ere sunk was that portentous light
Behind the hills, and utter night
Was on the valley spread.
He paused perforce,—and blew his horn,
And on the mountain echoes borne
Was heard an answering sound,
A wild and lonely trumpet note,
In middle air it seem'd to float
High o'er the battled mound;
And sounds were heard, as when a guard
Of some proud castle, holding ward,
Pace forth their nightly round.

The valiant Knight of Triermain

Rung forth his challenge-blast again,

But answer came there none ;

And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,

Darkling he sought the vale in vain,

Until the dawning shone.

And when it dawned, that wondrous sight,

Distinctly seen by meteor-light,

It all had passed away !

And that enchanted mount once more

A pile of granite fragments bore,

As at the close of day.

XI.

Steeled for the deed, De Vaux's heart

Scorned from his venturous quest to part,

He walks the vale once more;

But only sees, by night or day,

That shattered pile of rocks so grey,

Hears but the torrent's roar.

Till when, through fields of azure borne,

The moon renewed her silver horn,

Just at the time her waning ray

Had faded in the dawning day,

A summer mist arose;

Adown the vale the vapours float,

And cloudy undulations moat

That tufted mound of mystic note,

As round its base they close.

And higher now the fleecy tide

Ascends its stern and shaggy side,

Until the airy billows hide

The rock's majestic isle :

It seemed a veil of filmy lawn,

By some fantastic fairy drawn

Around enchanted pile,

XII.

The breeze came softly down the brook,

And sighing as it blew,

The veil of silver mist it shook,

And to De Vaux's eager look

Renewed that wondrous view.

For, though the loitering vapour braved

The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved

Its mantle's dewy fold ;

And still, when shook that filmy screen,

Were towers and bastions dimly seen,

And Gothic battlements between

Their gloomy length unrolled.

Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine eye

Once more the fleeting vision die !—

The gallant Knight can speed

As prompt and light as, when the hound

Is opening, and the horn is wound,

K

Careers the hunter's steed.

Down the steep dell his course sustain

Hath rivall'd archer's shaft ;

But ere the mound he could attain,

The rocks their shapeless form regain,

And, mocking load his labour vain,

The mountain spirits laugh'd.

Far up the echoing dell was borne

Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII.

Wroth waxed the Warrior. *Am I then*

Fool'd by the enemies of men,

Like a poor hind, whose homeward way
Is haunted by malicious fay ?
Is Triermain become your taunt,
De Vaux your scorn ? False fiends, avaunt !"—
A weighty curtal-axe he bare ;
The baleful blade so bright and square,
And the tough shaft of heben wood,
Were oft in Scottish gore embrued.
Backward his stately form he drew,
And at the rocks the weapon threw,
Just where one crag's projected crest
Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest.
Hurl'd with main force, the weapon's shock
Rent a huge fragment of the rock.

If by mere strength 'twere hard to tell,
 Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
 But down the headlong ruin came,
 With cloud of dust and flash of flame.
 Down bank, o'er bush, its course was borne,
 Crush'd lay the copse, the earth was torn,
 Till, staid at length, the ruin dread
 Cumber'd the torrent's rocky bed,
 And bade the waters' high-swoln tide
 Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV.

When ceased that thunder, Triermain
 Survey'd the mound's rude front again ;

And lo ! the ruin had laid bare,
Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
Whose moss'd and fractured steps might lend
The means the summit to ascend,
And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
Began to scale these magic rocks,
And soon a platform won,
Where, the wild witchery to close,
Within three lances' length arose
The Castle of Saint John !
No misty phantom of the air,
No meteor-blazon'd show was there;
In morning splendour, full and fair,
The massive fortress shone.

XV.

Embattled high and proudly tower'd,
Shaded by ponderous flankers, lower'd

The portal's gloomy way.

Though for six hundred years and more,
Its strength had brooked the tempest's roar,
The scutcheon'd emblems that it bore

Had suffered no decay ;

But from the eastern battlement,
A turret had made sheer descent,
And down in recent ruin rent,

In the mid torrent lay.

Else, o'er the Castle's brow sublime,
Insults of violence or of time

Unfelt had pass'd away.
In shapeless characters of yore,
The gate this stern inscription bore :

XVI.

Inscription.

Patience waits the destined day,
Strength can clear the cumber'd way.
Warrior, who hast waited long,
Firm of soul, of sinew strong,
It is given to thee to gaze
On the pile of ancient days.

Never mortal builder's hand
This enduring fabric plann'd ;
Sign and sigil, word of power,
From the earth raised keep and tower.
View it o'er, and pace it round,
Rampart, turret, battled mound ;
Dare no more ! to cross the gate
Were to tamper with thy fate ;
Strength and fortitude were vain.
View it o'er—and turn again.

XVII.

“ That would I,” said the Warrior bold,
“ If that my frame were bent and old,

And my thin blood dropp'd slow and cold

As icicle in thaw ;

But, while my heart can feel it dance,

Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,

And this good arm wields sword or lance,

I mock these words of awe !"—

He said ; the wicket felt the sway

Of his strong hand, and straight gave way,

And with rude crash and jarring bray,

The rusty bolts withdraw.

But o'er the threshold as he strode,

And forward took the vaulted road,

An unseen arm, with force amain,

The ponderous gate flung close again,

And rusted bolt and bar
 Spontaneous took their place once more,
 While the deep arch with sullen roar
 Return'd their surly jar.
 "Now closed is the gin and the prey within,
 By the Rood of Lanercost !
 But he that would win the war-wolf's skin,
 May rue him of his boast."—
 Thus muttering, on the Warrior went,
 By dubious light, down steep descent.

XVIII.

Unbarr'd, unlock'd, unwatch'd, a port
 Led to the Castle's outer court ;

There the main fortress, broad and tall,
 Spread its long range of bower and hall,
 And towers of varied size,
 Wrought with each ornament extreme,
 That Gothic art, in wildest dream
 Of fancy, could devise.
 But full between the Warrior's way
 And the main portal-arch, there lay
 An inner moat ;
 Nor bridge nor boat
 Affords De Vaux the means to cross
 The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
 His arms aside in haste he flings,
 Cuirass of steel and hauberk rings,

And down falls helm, and down the shield,
 Rough with the dints of many a field.
 Fair was his manly form, and fair
 His keen dark eye, and close-curl'd hair,
 When,—all unarm'd, save that the brand
 Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
 With nought to fence his dauntless breast
 But the close gipon's* under vest,
 Whose sullied buff the sable stains
 Of hauberk and of mail retains,—
 Roland De Vaux upon the brim
 Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim.

* A sort of doublet, worn beneath the armour.

XIX.

Accouter'd thus he dared the tide,
And soon he reached the farther side,
And entered soon the Hold,
And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
Were blazon'd all with feats of pride,
By warriors done of old.
In middle lists they counter'd here,
While trumpets seemed to blow ;
And there, in den or desert drear,
They quelled gigantic foe,
Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,
Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.

Strange in their arms, and strange in face,
Heroes they seemed of ancient race,
Whose deeds of arms, and race, and name,
Forgotten long by later fame,

Were here depicted to appeal
Those of an age degenerate,
Whose bold intrusion braved their fate

In this enchanted hall.
For some short space, the venturous Knight
With these high marvels fed his sight;
Then sought the chamber's upper end,
Where three broad easy steps ascend
To an arched portal door,

In whose broad folding leaves of state
 Was framed a wicket window-grate ;
 And, ere he ventured more,
 The gallant Knight took earnest view
 That grated wicket-window through.

XX.

Oh for his arms ! Of martial weed
 Had never mortal Knight such need !—
 He spied a stately gallery ; all
 Of snow-white marble was the wall,
 The vaulting, and the floor ;
 And, contrast strange ! on either hand
 There stood array'd, in sable band,

Four Maids whom Afric bore ;
And each a Lybian tyger led,
Held by as bright and frail a thread
As Lucy's golden hair,
For the leash that bound these monsters dread
Was but of gossamer.
Each Maiden's short barbaric vest
Left all unclosed the knee and breast,
And limbs of shapely jet ;
White was their vest and turban's fold,
On arms and ancles rings of gold
In savage pomp were set;
A quiver on their shoulders lay,
And in their hand an assagay.

Such and so silent stood they there,

That Roland well nigh hoped

He saw a band of statues rare,

Stationed the gazer's soul to scare ;

But, when the wicket oped,

Each griesly beast 'gan upward draw,

Roll'd his grim eye, and spread his claw,

Scented the air, and licked his jaw ;

While these weird Maids, in Moorish tongue,

A wild and dismal warning sung.

XXI.

“ Rash Adventurer, bear thee back !

Dread the spell of Dahomay !

L

Fear the race of Zaharak,

Daughters of the burning day !

“ When the whirlwind’s gusts are wheeling,

Our’s it is the dance to braid ;

Zarah’s sands in pillars reeling,

Join the measure that we tread,

When the Moon hath don’d her cloak,

And the stars are red to see,

Shrill when pipes the sad Sirec,

Music meet for such as we.

“ Where the shatter’d columns lie,

Shewing Carthage once had been,

If the wandering Santon's eye

Our mysterious rites hath seen,—

Oft he cons the prayer of death,

To the nations preaches doom,

'Azrael's brand hath left the sheath !

Moslems, think upon the tomb !"—

" Our's the scorpion, our's the snake,

Our's the hydra of the fen,

Our's the tyger of the brake,

All that plagues the sons of men.

Our's the tempest's midnight wrack,

Pestilence that wastes by day—

Dread the race of Zaharak !

Fear the spell of Dahomay !"—

XXII.

Uncouth and strange the accents shrill

Rung those vaulted roofs among,

Long it was ere, faint and still,

Died the far-resounded song.

While yet the distant echoes roll,

The Warrior communed with his soul.

“ When first I took this venturous quest,

I swore upon the rood,

Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,

For evil or for good.

My forward path, too well I ween,

Lies yonder fearful ranks between ;

For man unarm'd, 'tis bootless hope

With tygers and with fiends to cope—

Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
Save famine dire and fell despair?—
Other conclusion let me try,
Since, chuse howe'er I list, I die.
Forward, lies faith and knightly fame;
Behind, are perjury and shame.
In life or death I hold my word!"—
With that he drew his trusty sword,
Caught down a banner from the wall,
And entered thus the fearful hall.

XXIII.

On high each wayward Maiden threw
Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!

On either side a tyger sprung—
Against the leftward foe he flung
The ready banner, to engage
With tangling folds the brutal rage;
The right-hand monster in mid air
He struck so fiercely and so fair,
Through gullet and through spinal bone
The trenchant blade hath sheerly gone.
His griesly brethren ramp'd and yell'd,
But the slight leash their rage withheld,
Whilst, 'twixt their ranks, the dangerous road
Firmly, though swift, the champion strode.
Safe to the gallery's bound he drew,
Safe past an open portal through;

And when 'gainst followers he flung
The gate, judge if the echoes rung !
Onward his daring course he bore,
While, mixed with dying growl and roar,
Wild jubilee and loud hurra
Pursued him on his venturous way .

XXIV.

“ Hurra, hurra ! Our watch is done !
We hail once more the tropic sun.
Pallid beams of northern day,
Farewell, -farewell ! Hurra, hurra !
“ Five hundred years o'er this cold glen
Hath the pale sun come round agen ;

Foot of man, till now, hath ne'er

Dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

“ Warrior ! thou, whose dauntless heart

Gives us from our ward to part,

Be as strong in future trial,

Where resistance is denial.

“ Now for Afric's glowing sky,

Zwenga wide and Atlas high,

Zaharak and Dahomay!——

Mount the winds ! Hurra, hurra !”——

XXV.

The wizard song at distance died
As if in ether borne astray,
While through waste halls and chambers wide
The Knight pursued his steady way,
Till to a lofty dome he came,
That flash'd with such a brilliant flame,
As if the wealth of all the world
Were there in rich confusion hurl'd.
For here the gold, in sandy heaps,
With duller earth incorporate sleeps;
Was there in ingots piled, and there
Coined badge of empery it bare ;
Yonder, huge bars of silver lay,

Dimm'd by the diamond's neighbouring ray,
Like the pale moon in morning day ;
And in the midst four Maidens stand,
The daughters of some distant land.
Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
That fringes oft a thunder-sky ;
Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
And cotton fillets bound their hair ;
Slim was their form, their mien was shy,
To earth they bent the humbled eye,
Folded their arms, and suppliant kneel'd,
And thus their proffer'd gifts reveal'd.

XXVI.

CHORUS.

" See the treasures Merlin piled,
Portion meet for Arthur's child.
Bathe in Wealth's unbounded stream,
Wealth that Avarice ne'er could dream !"

FIRST MAIDEN.

" See these clots of virgin gold !
Severed from the sparry mould,
Nature's mystic alchemy
In the mine thus bade them lie ;
And their orient smile can win
Kings to stoop, and saints to sin."—

SECOND MAIDEN.

" See these pearls, that long have slept ;
These were tears by Naiads wept
For the loss of Marinel.
Tritons in the silver shell
Treasured them, till hard and white
As the teeth of Amphitrite."—

THIRD MAIDEN.

" Does a livelier hue delight ?
Here are rubies blazing bright,
Here the emerald's fairy green,
And the topaz glows between ;
Here their varied hues unite
In the changeful chrysolite."—

FOURTH MAIDEN.

" Leave these gems of poorer shine,
 Leave them all, and look on mine !
 While their glories I expand,
 Shade thine eye-brows with thy hand.
 Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
 Blind the rash beholder's gaze."—

CHORUS.

" Warrior, seize the splendid store ;
 Would 'twere all our mountains bore !
 We should ne'er, in future story,
 Read, Peru, thy perish'd glory !"——

XXVII.

Calmly and unconcern'd, the Knight
Waved aside the treasures bright :
“ Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray !
Bar not thus my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys !
Bid your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thirsty land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steed,
And all the ore he deigned to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilts his sword.”—
Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII.

And now the morning sun was high,

De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry ;

When lo ! a plashing sound he hears,

A gladsome signal that he hears

Some frolic water-run ;

And soon he reached a court-yard square,

Where, dancing in the sultry air,

Tossed high aloft, a fountain fair

Was sparkling in the sun.

On right and left, a fair arcade,

In long perspective view displayed

Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade ;

But, full in front, a door,

Low-browed and dark, seem'd as it led

To the lone dwelling of the dead,

Whose memory was no more.

Here stopped De Vaux an instant's space,

To bathe his parched lips and face,

And mark'd with well-pleased eye,

Refracted on the fountain stream,

In rainbow hues, the dazzling beam,

Of that gay summer sky.

His senses felt a mild controul,

Like that which lulls the weary soul,

From contemplation high

Relaxing, when the ear receives

The music that the green-wood leaves

Make to the breezes' sigh.

XXX.

And oft, in such a dreamy mood,
The half-shut eye can frame
Fair apparitions in the wood,
As if the Nymphs of field and flood
In gay procession came.
Are these of such fantastic mould,
Seen distant down the fair arcade,
These Maids enlinked in sister-fold,
Who, late at bashful distance staid,
Now tripping from the greenwood shade,
Nearer the musing champion draw,
And, in a pause of seeming awe,
Again stand doubtful now?—

M

Ah, that sly pause of witching powers !

That seems to say, " To please be ours,

Be yours to tell us how."—

Their hue was of the golden glow

That suns of Candahar bestow,

O'er which in slight suffusion flows

A frequent tinge of paly rose ;

Their limbs were fashioned fair and free,

In Nature's justest symmetry,

And wreathed with flowers, with odours graced,

Their raven ringlets reached the waist ;

In eastern pomp, its gilding pale

The hennah lent each shapely nail,

And the dark sumah gave the eye

More liquid and more lustrous dye.

The spotless veil of misty lawn,
 In studied disarrangement, drawn
 The form and bosom o'er,
 To win the eye, or tempt the touch,
 For modesty shewed all too much—
 Too much—yet promised more.

XXXI.

“ Gentle Knight, awhile delay,”
 Thus they sung, “ thy toilsome way,
 While we pay the duty due
 To our Master and to you.
 Over Avarice, over Fear,
 Love triumphant led thee here ;

Warrior, list to us, for we
Are slaves to Love, are friends to thee.

“ Though no treasured gems have we,
To proffer on the bended knee,
Though we boast nor arm nor heart,
For the assagay or dart,
Swains have given each simple girl
Ruby lip and teeth of pearl;
Or, if dangers more you prize,
Flatterers find them in our eyes.

‘ Stay, then, gentle Warrior, stay,
Rest till evening steal on day;

Stay, O stay !—in yonder bowers
We will braid thy locks with flowers,
Spread the feast and fill the wine,
Charm thy ear with sounds divine,
Weave our dances till delight
Yield to languor, day to night.

“ Then shall she you most approve,
Sing the lays that best you love,
Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,
Till the weary night be o’er—
Gentle Warrior, would’st thou more !—

Would'st thou more, fair Warrior,—she
Is slave to Love, and slave to thee.”—

XXXII.

O do not hold it for a crime
In the bold hero of my rhyme,
For stoic look,
And meet rebuke,
He lacked the heart or time!
As round the band of syrens trip,
He kissed one damsel's laughing lip,
And pressed another's proffered hand,
Spoke to them all in accents bland;

But broke their magic circle through ;

“ Kind Maids,” he said, “ adieu, adieu !

My fate, my fortune, forward lies.”—

He said, and vanished from their eyes ;

But, as he dared that darksome way,

Still heard behind their lovely lay :

“ Fair Flower of Courtesy, depart !

Go, where the feelings of the heart

With the warm pulse in concord move ;

Go, where Virtue sanctions love !”—

XXXIII.

Downward De Vaux through darksome ways

And ruined vaults has gone,

Till issue from their wilder'd maze,
Or safe retreat, seem'd none,
And e'en the dismal path he strays
Grew worse as he went on.
For cheerful sun, for living air,
Foul vapours rise and mine-fires glare,
Whose fearful light the dangers show'd
That dogg'd him on that dreadful road.
Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
They shew'd, but shew'd not how to shun.
These scenes of desolate despair,
These smothering clouds of poison'd air,
How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
Though 'twere to face yon tygers ranged!

Nay, soothful bards have said,
So perilous his state seem'd now,
He wished him under arbour bough
With Asia's willing maid.
When, joyful sound ! at distance near
A trumpet flourish'd loud and clear,
And as it ceased, a lofty lay
Seem'd thus to chide his lagging way.

XXXIV.

" Son of Honour, theme of story,
Think on the reward before ye !
Danger, darkness, toil despise ;
'Tis Ambition bids thee rise.

" He, that would her heights ascend,
 Many a weary step must wend ;
 Hand and foot and knee he tries :
 Thus Ambition's minims rise.

" Lag not now, though rough the way,
 Fortune's mood brooks no delay ;
 Grasp the boon that's spread before ye,
 Monarch's power, and Conqueror's glory !"—

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
 A steep ascent the wanderer found,
 And then a turret stair ;
 Nor climb'd he far its steepy round
 Till fresher blew the air,

And next a welcome glimpse was given,
That cheer'd him with the light of heaven.

At length his toil has won
A lofty hall with trophies dress'd,
Where, as to greet imperial guest,
Four Maidens stood, whose crimson vest
Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV.

Of Europe seem'd the damsels all ;
The first a nymph of lively Gaul,
Whose easy step and laughing eye
Her borrow'd air of awe belie ;
The next a maid of Spain,

Dark-eyed, dark-haired, sedate yet bold;
While ivory skin and tress of gold
Her shy and bashful comrade told
For daughter of Almaine.
These Maidens bore a royal robe,
With crown, with sceptre, and with globe,
Emblems of empery ;
The fourth a space behind them stood,
And leant upon a harp, in mood
Of minstrel ecstasy.
Of merry England she, in dress
Like ancient British druidess;
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,

And, in her hand display'd,
 A crown did that fourth Maiden hold,
 But unadorn'd with gems and gold,
 Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI.

At once to brave De Vaux knelt down
 These foremost Maidens three,
 And proffer'd sceptre, robe, and crown,
 Liegedom and seignorie
 O'er many a region wide and fair,
 Destined, they said, for Arthur's heir;
 But homage would he none :—

"Rather," he said, "De Vaux would ride

A Warden of the Border side,

In plate and mail, than, robed in pride,

A monarch's empire own;

Rather, far rather, would he be

A free-born Knight of England free,

Than sit on Despot's throne."

So pass'd he on, when that fourth Maid,

As starting from a trance,

Upon the harp her fingers laid;

Her magic touch the chords obey'd,

Their soul awaked at once!

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN.

“ Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately Towers, and banner'd Keep !
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

“ Fiends ! that wait on Merlin's spell,
Hear the foot-fall ! mark it well !
Spread your dusky wings abroad,
Boune ye for your homeward road !

“ It is HIS, the first who e'er
Dared the dismal Hall of Fear ;
His, who hath the snares defied,
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and Pride.

" Quake to your foundations deep,
 Bastion huge and Turret steep !
 Tremble Keep, and totter Tower !
 This is Gyneth's waking hour."——

XXXVII.



Thus while she sung, the venturous Knight ..
 Has reach'd a bower, where milder light
 Through crimson'd curtains fell ;
 Such soften'd shade the hill receives,
 Her purple veil when twilight leaves
 Upon its western swell.
 That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
 Had wondrous store of rare and rich
 As e'er was seen with eye ;

For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limn'd in proper dye.
All seem'd to sleep—the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair
Between the earth and sky.
But what of pictured rich and rare
Could win De Vaux's eye-glance, where,
Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,
He saw King Arthur's child !
Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
From her brow had pass'd away,

Forgot was that fell tourney-day,

For, as she slept, she smiled.

It seemed that the repentant Seer

Her sleep of many an hundred year

With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII.

That form of maiden loveliness,

'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth,

That ivory chair, that sylvan dress,

The arms and ancles bare, express

Of Lyulph's tale the truth.

Still upon her garment's hem

Vanoc's blood made purple gem,

And the warder of command
Cumber'd still her sleeping hand ;
Still her dark locks dishevell'd flow
From net of pearl o'er breast of snow ;
And so fair the slumberer seems,
That De Vaux impeached his dreams,
Vapid all and void of might,
Hiding half her charms from sight.
Motionless a while he stands,
Folds his arms and clasps his hands,
Trembling in his fitful joy,
Doubtful how he shall destroy
Long-enduring spell ;

Doubtful too, when slowly rise
 Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
 What these eyes shall tell.

" St George ! St Mary ! can it be,
 That they will kindly look on me !"—

XXXIX.

Gently, lo ! the Warrior kneels,
 Soft that lovely hand he steals,
 Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
 But the warder leaves her grasp ;
 Lightning flashes, rolls the thunder !
 Gyneth startles from her sleep,
 Totters tower, and trembles keep,

Burst the Castle walls asunder !
Fierce and frequent were the shocks,
Melt the magic halls away ——
——But beneath their mystic rocks,
In the arms of bold De Vaux,
Safe the Princess lay !
Safe and free from magic power,
Blushing like the rose's flower
Opening to the day ;
And round the Champion's brows were bound
The crown that Druidess had wound,
Of the green laurel-bay.

And this was what remain'd of all
The wealth of each enchanted hall,
The Garland and the Dame :—
But where should Warrior seek the meed,
Due to high worth for daring deed,
Except from LOVE and FAME !

CONCLUSION.

I.

My Lucy, when the maid is won,
The Minstrel's task, thou know'st, is done ;
And to require of bard
That to the dregs his tale should run,
Were ordinance too hard.
Our lovers, briefly be it said,
Wedded as lovers wont to wed,
When tale or play is o'er ;

Lived long and blest, loved fond and true,

And saw a numerous race renew

The honours that they bore.

Know, too, that when a pilgrim strays,

In morning mist or evening maze,

Along the mountain lone,

That fairy fortress often mocks

His gaze upon the castled rocks

Of the Valley of Saint John.

But never man since brave De Vaux

The charmed portal won;

'Tis now a vain illusive show,

That melts whene'er the sunbeams glow,

Or the fresh breeze hath blown.

II.

But see, my love, where far below
Our lingering wheels are moving slow,
The whiles up-gazing still,
Our menials eye our steepy way,
Marvelling, perchance, what whim can stay
Our steps when eve is sinking grey
On this gigantic hill.
So think the vulgar—Life and time
Ring all their joys in one dull chime
Of luxury and ease;
And O! beside these simple knaves,
How many better born are slaves
To such coarse joys as these!

Dead to the nobler sense that glows
When Nature's grander scenes unclose.
But, Lucy, we will love them yet,
The mountain's misty coronet,
The green wood and the wold ;
And love the more, that of their maze
Adventure high of other days
By ancient bards is told,
Bringing, perchance, like my poor tale,
Some moral truth in fiction's veil :
Nor love them less, that o'er the hill
The evening breeze, as now, comes chill ;—

**My love shall wrap her warm,
And, fearless of the slippery way,
While safe she trips the heathy brae,
Shall hang on Arthur's arm.**

THE END.

NOTES.

NOTES.

Like Collins, ill-starred name!—P. 11. l. 11.

COLLINS, according to Johnson, “by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.”

The Baron of Triermain.—P. 15. l. 2.

Triermain was a fief of the Barony of Gilsland, in Cumberland: it was possessed by a Saxon family at the

time of the Conquest, but, “ after the death of Gilmore, Lord of Tryermaine and Torcrossock, Hubert Vaux gave Tryermaine and Torcrossock to his second son, Ranulph Vaux, which Ranulph afterwards became heir to his elder brother Robert, the founder of Lanercost, who died without issue. Ranulph, being Lord of all Gilsland, gave Gilmore’s lands to his own younger son, named Roland, and let the barony descend to his eldest son Robert, son of Ranulph. Roland had issue Alexander, and he Ranulph, after whom succeeded Robert, and they were named Rolands successively, that were lords thereof, until the reign of Edward the Fourth. That house gave for arms, Vert, a bend dexter, chequy or and gules.”

BURN’S *Antiq. of Westmoreland and Cumberland*,
vol. II. p. 482.

And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.—P. 22. l. 13.

Dunmailraise is one of the grand passes from Cumberland into Westmoreland. It takes its name from a

cairn, or pile of stones, erected, it is said, to the memory of Dunmail, the last king of Cumberland.

———— *Penrith's Table Round.*—P. 24. l. 9.

A circular entrenchment, about half a mile from Penrith, is thus popularly termed. The circle within the ditch is about one hundred and sixty paces in circumference, with openings, or approaches, directly opposite to each other. As the ditch is on the inner side, it could not be intended for the purpose of defence, and it has reasonably been conjectured, that the inclosure was designed for the solemn exercise of feats of chivalry; and the embankment around for the convenience of the spectators.

Mayburgh's mound and stones of power.—P. 24. l. 11.

Higher up the river Eamont than Arthur's Round Table, is a prodigious inclosure of great antiquity, formed by a collection of stones upon the top of a gently sloping hill, called Mayburgh. In the plain which it encloses there stands erect an unhewn stone of twelve feet

in height. Two similar masses are said to have been destroyed during the memory of man. The whole appears to be a monument of druidical times.

Though never sunbeam could discern.

The surface of that sable tarn.—P. 28. l. 8, 9.

The small lake called Scales-tarn lies so deeply embosomed in the recesses of the huge mountain called Saddleback, more poetically Glaramara, is of such great depth, and so completely hidden from the sun, that it is said its beams never reach it, and that the reflection of the stars may be seen at mid-day.

———— *Tintadgel's spear.—P. 41. l. 6.*

Tintadgel Castle, in Cornwall, is reported to have been the birth-place of King Arthur.

—— *Caliburn in cumbrous length.—P. 41. l. 8.*

This was the name of King Arthur's well-known sword, sometimes also called Excalibar.

From Arthur's hand the goblet flew.—P. 67. l. 11.

The author has an indistinct recollection of an adventure somewhat similar to that which is here ascribed to King Arthur, having befallen one of the ancient kings of Denmark. The horn in which the burning liquor was presented to that monarch is said still to be preserved in the Royal Museum at Copenhagen.

Nor tower nor donjon could he spy

Darkening against the morning sky.—P. 68. l. 11, 12.

——“We now gained a view of the Vale of St John's, a very narrow dell, hemmed in by mountains, through which a small brook makes many meanderings, washing little inclosures of grass-ground, which stretch up the risings of the hills. In the widest part of the dale you are struck with the appearance of an ancient ruined castle, which seems to stand upon the summit of a little mount, the mountains around forming an amphitheatre. This massive bulwark shews a front of various towers, and makes an awful, rude, and Gothic appearance, with its lofty turrets and ragged battlements: we traced the

galleries, the bending arches, the buttresses. The greatest antiquity stands characterized in its architecture; the inhabitants near it assert it is an antediluvian structure. :

“ The traveller’s curiosity is roused, and he prepares to make a nearer approach, when that curiosity is put upon the rack by his being assured, that, if he advances, certain genii who govern the place, by virtue of their supernatural arts and necromancy, will strip it of all its beauties, and, by enchantment, transform the magic walls. The vale seems adapted for the habitation of such beings; its gloomy recesses and retirements look like haunts of evil spirits. There was no delusion in the report; we were soon convinced of its truth; for this piece of antiquity, so venerable and noble in its aspect, as we drew near changed its figure, and proved no other than a shaken massive pile of rocks, which stand in the midst of this little vale, disunited from the adjoining mountains, and have so much the real form and resemblance of a castle, that they bear the name of the Castle Rocks of St John.”

HUTCHINSON’S *Excursion to the Lakes*, p. 121.

The Saxons to subjection brought.—P. 69. l. 10.

Arthur is said to have defeated the Saxons in twelve pitched battles, and to have atchieved the other feats alluded to in the text.

There Merolt of the iron mace, &c.—P. 73. l. 6, &c.

The characters named in the following stanza are all of them more or less distinguished in the romances which treat of King Arthur and his Round Table, and their names are strung together according to the established custom of minstrels upon such occasions: for example, in the ballad of the Marriage of Sir Gawaine;

Sir Lancelet, Sir Stephen bolde,

They rode with them that daye,

And, foremost of the companye,

There rode the stewarde Kaye :

Soe did Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,

And eke Sir Garratte keen,

Sir Tristram too, that gentle knight,

To the forest fresh and greene.

And Lancelot, that evermore

Look'd stol'n-wise on the queen.—P. 74. l. 4.

Upon this delicate subject hear Richard Robinson, citizen of London, in his *Assertion of King Arthur* :

“ But as it is a thing sufficiently apparant that she (Guenever, wife of King Arthur) was beautiful, so it is a thing doubted whether she was chaste, yea or no. Truly, so far as I can with honestie, I would spare the impayred honor and fame of noble women. But yet the truth of the historie pluckes me by the eare, and willet not onely, but commandeth me to declare what the ancients have deemed of her. To wrestle or contend with so greate authoritie were indeede unto me a controversie, and that greate.”

Assertion of King Arthure. Imprinted by

John Wolfe, London, 1582.

There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,

And one who loved his own.—P. 81. l. 11, 12.

In our forefathers' tyme, when papistrie, as a standyng poole, covered and overflowed all Englande, fewe bookes

were read in our tongue, saving certaine bookes of chevalrie, as they said, for pastime and pleasure; which, as some say, were made in monasteries, by idle monks or wanton channons. As one for example, *La Morte d'Arthure*; the whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two speciall poynts, in open manslaughter and bold bawdrye: in which booke they be counted the noblest knightes that do kill most men without any quarell, and commit fowlest adoulteries by sutlest shiftes; as Sir Launcelote, with the wife of King Arthur, his master; Sir Tristram, with the wife of King Marke, his uncle; Sir Lamerocke, with the wife of King Lote, that was his own aunt. This is good stuff for wise men to laughe at, or honest men to take pleasure at, yet I know when God's Bible was banished the court, and *La Morte d'Arthure* received into the prince's chamber."

ASCHAM's Schoolmaster.

—— *valiant Carodac,*

Who won the cup of gold.—P. 82. l. 3, 4.

See the comic tale of the Boy and the Mantle, in the third volume of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, from the Breton or Norman original of which Ariosto is supposed to have taken his Tale of the Enchanted Cup.

FRAGMENTS,

Which originally appeared in the EDINBURGH
ANNUAL REGISTER *for* 1809.

FRAGMENTS.

THE POACHER.

WELCOME, grave Stranger, to our green retreats,
Where health with exercise and freedom meets!
Thrice welcome, Sage, whose philosophic plan
By Nature's limits metes the rights of man;
Generous as he, who now for freedom bawls,
Now gives full value for true Indian shawls;

O'er court, o'er custom-house, his shoe who flings,
Now bilks excisemen, and now bullies kings.
Like his, I ween, thy comprehensive mind
Holds laws as mouse-traps baited for mankind ;
Thine eye, applaudive, each sly vermin sees,
That baulks the snare, yet battens on the cheese ;
Thine ear has heard, with scorn instead of awe,
Our buckskin'd justices expound the law,
Wire-draw the acts that fix for wires the pain,
And for the netted partridge noose the swain ;
And thy vindictive arm would fain have broke
The last light fetter of the feudal yoke,
To give the denizens of wood and wild,
Nature's free race, to each her free-born child.

Hence hast thou mark'd, with grief, fair London's race
 Mock'd with the boon of one poor Easter chace,
 And long'd to send them forth as free as when
 Pour'd o'er Chantilly the Parisian train,
 When musquet, pistol, blunderbuss, combined,
 And scarce the field-pieces were left behind !
 A squadron's charge each leveret's heart dismayed,
 On every covey fired a bold brigade ;
La Douce Humanité approved the sport,
 For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt.
 Shouts patriotic solemnized the day,
 And Seine re-echoed *Vive la Liberté !*
 But mad *Citoyen*, meek *Monsieur* again,
 With some few added links resumes his chain ;

Then, since such scenes to France no more are known,
 Come, view with me a hero of thine own !
 ' One, whose free actions vindicate the cause
 Of sylvan liberty o'er feudal laws.

Seek we yon glades, where the proud oak o'ertops
 Wide-waving seas of birch and hazel copse,
 Leaving between deserted isles of land,
 Where stunted heath is patch'd with ruddy sand ;
 And lonely on the waste the yew is seen,
 Or straggling hollies spread a brighter green.
 Here, little worn, and winding dark and steep,
 Our scarce mark'd path descends yon dingle deep :
 Follow—but heedful, cautious of a trip,
 In earthly mire philosophy may slip.

Step slow and wary o'er that swampy stream,
 Till, guided by the charcoal's smothering steam,
 We reach the frail yet barricaded door
 Of hovel formed for poorest of the poor ;
 No hearth the fire, no vent the smoke receives,
 The walls are wattles, and the covering leaves ;
 For, if such hut, our forest statutes say,
 Rise in the progress of one night and day ;
 Though placed where still the Conqueror's hests
 o'erawe,
 And his son's stirrup shines the badge of law ;
 The builder claims the unenviable boon,
 To tenant dwelling, framed as slight and soon

As wigwam wild, that shrouds the native froze
 On the bleak coast of frost-barr'd Labrador.¹

Approach, and through the unlatticed window
 peep—

Nay, shrink not back, the inmate is asleep ;
 Sunk mid yon sordid blankets, till the sun
 Stoop to the west, the plunderer's toils are done.
 Loaded and primed, and prompt for desperate hand,
 Rifle and fowling-piece beside him stand,

¹ Such is the law in the New Forest, Hampshire, tending greatly to increase the various settlements of thieves, smugglers, and deer-stealers, who infest it. In the forest courts the presiding judge wears as a badge of office an antique stirrup, said to have been that of William Rufus. See Mr William Rose's spirited poem, entitled, "The Red King."

While round the hut are in disorder laid
 The tools and booty of his lawless trade;
 For force or fraud, resistance or escape,
 The crow, the saw, the bludgeon, and the crape.
 His pilfered powder in yon nook he hoards,
 And the filch'd lead the church's roof affords—
 (Hence shall the rector's congregation fret,
 That, while his sermon's dry, his walls are wet.)
 The fish-spear barb'd, the sweeping net are there,
 Doe-hides, and pheasant-plumes, and skins of hare,
 Cordage for toils, and wiring for the snare.
 Barter'd for game from chace or warren won,
 Yon cask holds moonlight,² run when moon was none;

² A cant name for smuggled spirits.

And late-match'd spoils lie stow'd in hutch apart,
To wait the associate higgler's evening cart.

Look on his pallet foul, and mark his rest :
What scenes perturb'd are acting in his breast !
His sable brow is wet and wrung with pain,
And his dilated nostril toils in vain,
For short and scant the breath each effort draws,
And 'twixt each effort Nature claims a pause.
Beyond the loose and sable neck-cloth stretch'd,
His sinewy throat seems by convulsions twitch'd,
While the tongue falters, as to utterance loth,
Sounds of dire import—watch-word, threat, and oath.
Though stupified by toil, and drugg'd with gin,
The body sleep, the restless guest within

Now plies on wood and wold his lawless trade,
 Now in the fangs of justice wakes dismayed.—

“ Was that wild start of terror and despair,
 Those bursting eye-balls, and that wilder'd air,
 Signs of compunction for a murdered hare ?
 Do the locks bristle and the eye-brows arch,
 For grouse or partridge massacred in March ? ” —

No, scoffer, no ! Attend, and mark with awe,
 There is no wicket in the gate of law !
 He, that would e'er so slightly set ajar
 That awful portal, must undo each bar ;

Tempting occasion, habit, passion, pride,
 Will join to storm the breach, and force the barrier
 wide.

That ruffian, whom true men avoid and dread,
 Whom bruisers, poachers, smugglers, call Black Ned,
 Was Edward Mansell once;—the lightest heart,
 That ever played on holiday his part !
 The leader he in every Christmas game;
 The harvest feast grew blither when he came,
 And liveliest on the chords the bow did glance,
 When Edward named the tune and led the dance.
 Kind was his heart, his passions quick and strong,
 Hearty his laugh, and jovial was his song ;

And if he loved a gun, his father swore,
 “ ’Twas but a trick of youth would soon be o’er,
 Himself had done the same, some thirty years before.”

But he, whose humours spurn law’s awful yoke,
 Must herd with those by whom law’s bonds are broke.
 The common dread of justice soon allies
 The clown, who robs the warren or excise,
 With sterner felons trained to act more dread,
 Even with the wretch by whom his fellow bled.
 Then,—as in plagues the foul contagions pass,
 Leavening and festering the corrupted mass,—
 Guilt leagues with guilt, while mutual motives draw,
 Their hope impunity, their fear the law;

Their foes, their friends, their rendezvous the same,
 Till the revenue balked, or pilfered game,
 Flesh the young culprit, and example leads
 To darker villainy, and direr deeds.

Wild howled the wind the forest glades along,
 And oft the owl renewed her dismal song ;
 Around the spot where erst he felt the wound,
 Red William's spectre walked his midnight round.
 When o'er the swamp he cast his blighting look,
 From the green marshes of the stagnant brook
 The bittern's sullen shout the edges shook !
 The wading moon, with storm-presaging gleam,
 Now gave and now withheld her doubtful beam ;

The old Oak stooped his arms, then flung them high,
Bellowing and groaning to the troubled sky—
'Twas then, that, couched amid the brushwood sere,
In Malwood-walk young Mansell watched the deer :
The fattest buck received his deadly shot—
The watchful keeper heard, and sought the spot.
Stout were their hearts, and stubborn was their strife,
O'erpowered at length the outlaw drew his knife!
Next morn a corpse was found upon the fell—
The rest his waking agony may tell!

SONG.

Oh, say not, my love, with that mortified air,
That your spring-time of pleasure is flown,
Nor bid me to maids that are younger repair,
For those raptures that still are thine own !

Though April his temples may wreath with the vine,
Its tendrils in infancy curled,
'Tis the ardours of August mature us the wine
Whose life-blood enlivens the world.

Though thy form, that was fashioned as light as a fay's,
Has assumed a proportion more round,
And thy glance that was bright as a falcon's at gaze,
Looks soberly now on the ground,—

Enough, after absence to meet me again,
Thy steps still with ecstasy move ;
Enough, that those dear sober glances retain
For me the kind language of love !

THE END.

EDINBURGH :

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